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A MODERN HEBREW POET.

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A MODERN HEBREW POET.

THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

MOSES CHAIM LUZZATTO.

BY

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TO

MY PARENTS,

IN MEMORY OF

A HAPPY HOME, MADE DOUBLY DEAR BY THREE YEARS

OF ABSENCE,

REVERENTLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED.

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PREFACE.

THERE is no more successful method of awakening an interest in Hebrew studies than to direct attention to the lives and works of men who wrote Hebrew with the facility of a mother-tongue. Particularly is this method to be employed when, on the one hand, there is so much food for thought in the character and life-struggles of the author; and when, on the other hand, in his writings, the Hebrew language, wielded with the power and grace of a master, shows itself so exquisitely adapted for the expression of the highest emotions, so responsive to the play of the intellectual powers. We need, then, no further apology for presenting to the reader the name of Moses Chaim Luzzatto.

In the following essay, the author has suggested the forces which tended to mould Luzzatto's manner of life and thought. The present work may, at an early day, be supplemented by a more analytical treatment of the sources which he used to form his style, the influence

which he wielded on the modern Hebrew school, together with an English translation of his masterly work on Ethics--a book which alone perhaps gives the key-note to his character.

In the fervent hope that this sketch, imperfect though it be, may serve to awaken an interest in Hebrew studies, the author entrusts it to the kindness and forbearance of his readers.

A MODERN HEBREW POET.

לבי במזרח ואנכי בסוף מערב—*Jehuda Halevi.*

On the political decline of a nation, its intellectual development often assumes a peculiar shade. With the rude severance of national ties and associations, the people's consciousness tends to turn from scenes of disaster; and brooding over the glory of the past, will gaze full of confidence into the struggles of the future. Privation and suffering are either forgotten or awaken only stolid indifference; for Mysticism lends its magic aid to span the wide gap between past and future. In rapt, ecstatic contemplations of greater glory, the people seek some compensation for the loss of national existence. The more Mysticism tends to array itself in the garb of religion, and strives to solve the secrets of the Divine Nature and His relationship to man, the greater is its influence. When, forsaking the study of the manners and moralities of life, Mysticism leads its disciples into wild reveries about God's attributes, the abstruser its specu-

lations the more enticing do they become: for the dark, the mysterious in thought, wields far more attractive power than the clear and simple utterance.

The history of the Jews, on their dispersion, presents the same phenomenon. Politically impotent, persecuted and trampled upon, how natural for the people to turn from scenes of carnage and despair, and, in ecstatic contemplations of future grandeur, to find some consolation for the unrest of the present. The visions of Daniel,* which preached a joyful future to the despairing Jews at the time of the Maccabean struggle, and told of the downfall of Antiochus Epiphanes, were a direct emanation of the mystical spirit. It was Mysticism which fanned the dying embers of national consciousness and in the glowing flame lengthy traditions of past glory and long-cherished dreams of future power were welded together into a force which has never wholly lost its cohesiveness. Had the Jews been left to themselves, and no influences been brought to bear upon them from without, Mysticism might never have attained so full a development among them. It would assuredly, however, have been fostered to a certain extent; because the Bible—in whose study the Jewish intellect was to find a rallying-point, far

* Most critics are agreed as to the late authorship of Daniel. For a succint statement, compare Stanley's Jewish Church, III. p. 77, ff.

more potent than tracts of territory or smoking sacrifices—was made to furnish material for many a mystical contemplation. Just because the Bible was so revered by the race, a commentator was tempted to improvise a system of psychological exegesis of his own. The "chariot of God," מרכבה, in Ezekiel, and the "work of Creation," מעשה בראשית—those mystical subjects,* which fortunately were not to be explained to everybody, were too fascinating themes to be overlooked, and form indeed the basis of the Kabbala.

If the seeds of Mysticism were thus implanted in the national consciousness, and would have attained some growth, owing to national disaster on the one hand, and psychological exegesis on the other, with what greater freedom and strength did Mysticism spring forth when foreign ideas became current in the active world of Jewish thought. In the pregnant remark† of R. Simeon ben Lakish, that the Jews brought with them from their Babylonian exile the names of the angels, a flood of

* Talmud Chagiga 11 b, אין דורשין. Indeed Jehuda Halevi, in his "Kusari," iii. 65 (Cassel's second edition), remarks that R. Ishmael ben Elisha was so acquainted with the Mystic that he was worthy of a rank next to prophet. For Maimonides' view (Moreh ii. 29), that *Maase Bereschit* and *Merkaba* were respectively physics and metaphysics, see Dr. Joel's "Religions philosophie des Mose ben Maimon," 32.

† Jerus, Rosch ha-Schana, 1, p. 56, d. רושמעון בן לקיש אמר אף שמות המלאכים עלו בירן מבבל

light is thrown upon the esoteric influences which surrounded the Jews in their dispersion, influences which have left an ineffaceable stamp upon the literature and traditions of the race. The extent to which Persian,* Greek,† and Gnostical‡ ideas prevailed among Jewish thinkers, and the comparative ease with which mystical conceptions—particularly the doctrine of angels and demons—were received in Jewish circles; these are generally acknowledged facts. In the Medrash, Mysticism, playing upon the relations between God and man, has a distinct field of its own. Despite the didactic aim of many a poetical or allegorical medrash, the mystical coloring is readily perceptible.‖ During the period of the

* As to the influence of Persian and Indian conceptions on the Talmud and Medrash, there has been collected within a few decades, a large amount of material which, however, has still to be sifted and classified. A prominent attempt in this field is Kohut, Was hat die Talmudische Eschatologie aus dem Parsismus aufgenommen. Z. D. M. G. xxi. p. 552 ff. A valuable chapter on the relationship between Aryan and Semitic traditions is given by Spiegel Eranische Alterthumskunde I. p. 446. In Benfey's introduction to his *Pantchatantra*, the Indian origin of many rabbinical *sagen* is given. Compare, too, Graetz II_2 note xiv., Verhältniss der Zendreligion zum Judenthum, where more sources are given. Perles and Güdemann, in recent volumes of Frankel-Graetz's Monatschritt, have collected much interesting material. Rosen, "Das Papagaienbuch.' Leipzig, 1858, will be found to furnish striking comparisons with rabbinical legends. Also see Grünbaum, Z. D. M. G. for October, 1877.

† On the influence of Philo on the Medrash, compare Siegfried's Philo, p. 283, ff., where more authorities are quoted.

‡ Graetz has given a striking sketch of the influence of Gnosticism on Judaism, in his maiden-work, "Gnosticismus und Judenthum" Krotoschin, 1846.

‖ For instance, the story of God's Majesty as told in *Schir haschirim Rabba*,

Gaonim (740–1040), when, under the flourishing reign of liberal-minded Caliphs, Europe and Asia witnessed a revival of science and culture, the theological leanings of the Mutazilites were not without their influence on Jewish contemporaneous thought.* In the Book Enoch and Jubilee Book,† a whole mass of Jewish, Christian and Mohammedan fancies are strung together. The Book Enoch must have wielded considerable influence, for about 800–820, the Karaite, Benjamin ben Mose, of Nahavend.‡ imitated its mysticism in a work of his own, which had its admirers. Towards the end of the ninth century ‖—the exact date is unknown, and conflicting are the theories held in regard to its antiquity—the *Sefer Yezirah* is supposed to have been written. The mere fact that the devotees of Mysticism in the thirteenth century could have so violently opposed the followers of Maimonides, and scented from afar a danger to their doctrines in the bold rationalistic principles of the author of the *More Nebochim*, proves how the influence of Mys-

p. 28, b., has well pronounced mystical features.

* Compare Graetz's "Geschichte der Juden," v., p. 20 ff.

† Compare A. Dillman's "Das Buch Henoch," Leipzig, 1853. About the Book of Jubilees accounts are very uncertain. See Frankel's Monatschrift, V. 311,380.

‡ Graetz's Geschichte, V., 203 ff.

‖ Graetz with others, had formerly asserted that the Sefer Yezirah dated from the Gnostical period, but (Gesch. V. 280) he has abandoned this view on account of certain terms which appear in the work recalling the Arabic period.

ticism had increased until upon its basis a powerful sect was formed. It needed now but a skillful brain to shape the disjointed traditions into a Kabbalistical canon; and in the beginning of the fourteenth century after, in the preceding century,* Isaac the Blind (1190–1210) and his pupils, Azriel and Esra, had developed the theosophy of the Sefer Yezirah into a kind of system, Moses de Leon† delighted the Mystics by editing the famous Midrash of R. Simeon ben Jochai, which, under the name Sohar, is the shining light of mystical literature. With the appearance of this reputed authoritative work, which was in truth a cunning forgery, the power and numbers of the Mystics increased, until Mysticism began to permeate almost every branch of Hebrew literature. The persecutions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries gave fresh zest to mystical studies, so that when in the seventeenth century the notorious Sabbathai Zevi arose, and strove to make good his claims to the title of Messiah,‡ his mystical disciples were numerous. It was indeed a century of strange surprises, and many a Jewish mind was wrought up to such a point that faith became a fever, and the mere mention of a Messiah's name won a host of adherents. In Poland, during the Tartar inva-

* Compare Graetz's Geschichte, VII., p. 66. † Ib. 216 ff.

‡ Graetz, X. 204 ff.

sion of Chmelnicki, the Jews were singled out for massacre (1648–1651). In Holland, that cool worker and sagacious thinker, Manasseh ben Israel,* was speculating upon the probability of finding the descendants of the Lost Tribes in South America. In Holland, Spinoza developed the seeds of thought which the writings of the rabbis † had, in part, implanted in his brain, and philosophy witnessed a new era. Austria was the scene of many a bloody persecution. Germany was in the throes of the Thirty Years' War. The hopes excited by the Messianic efforts ‡ of David Reubeni and Salomo Molcho had proved abortive, it is true; but nevertheless the followers of the Kabbala turned with fresh hope to Sabbathai Zevi; and even when he died (1676) many never lost their faith in his chosen apostles, who spun their mystical reveries as late as the early decades of the eighteenth century.

It is not surprising that the Sohar found devotees, particularly in Italy,‖ for the land itself and the prevailing religion were of such a character as to secure for mystical doctrines a ready reception. In the beliefs and practices of the Church, Mysticism played

* Kayserling's Manasseh ben Israel.

† Compare M. Joel "Don Chasdai Creskas' Religionsphilos. Lehren in ihrem gesch. Einflusse," as well as the essays on Spinoza by the same author.

‡ See Graetz, IX., p. 257, 271,

‖ See Delitzsch, "Gesch. der jüd. Poesie," p. 204.

no secondary role. In Spain, on the other hand, Arabic culture had a predominating influence.

In Italy, for many centuries, the spiritual atmosphere was sluggish and unhealthy. The Papacy was regarded as the embodiment of the Godhead, and the mystic ceremonies of the Church were in daily swing. There were sweet-smelling incense, exquisite forms, splendid pictures, and superb architectural aids to devotion; but it was pomp rather than religion, and the iron might of the Church strove to crush any show of individuality. Of course, many an enterprising Pope made a brilliant exception with his ripe sympathies and nobility of character; but, as a rule, the Church, not humanity, was taken into consideration. The appearance of an infallible Church has rarely been without influence upon Judaism,* and the general character of the prevailing religion is never without its sharp influence upon the Jew. In Italy the Jew was also a kind of church-goer; in Spain, a liberal. The Piyut of Kalir is a mystical-religious chant; Yehuda Halevi was more cosmopolitan. In its enthusiastic reverence for religion, and its all-absorbing study of tradition, Italian Judaism suggests the air of Palestine.

* As a proof of this fact, we may safely assume that the excommunication of Spinoza was largely brought about by the almost contemporaneous condemnation of the writings of Descartes by the Synod of Dortrecht.

In its intellectual activity and strongly-marked individuality, Spanish Judaism reminds one of Babylonia, where foreign influences gave to the Jewish mind a wider range of vision. The Hebrew forgot for a time the promises which clung about Zion's hills; he found fresher beauty in the land of his adoption, and dropped the mask of the mystic in his devotion to science and culture. In Italy, on the contrary he could rarely neglect the forms of his ancestral faith; for the successive champions of St. Peter claimed to be legitimate heirs of priest and prophet.* Italy could never have produced a Spinoza: it gave birth to a Moses Chaim Luzzatto. It may, indeed, be true that the Jewish intellect is but little predisposed to metaphysical study.† The life of Luzzatto shows that it has a far stronger predilection for Mysticism. The miraculous history of his people, its mysterious preservation to the present day, and the thousand hopes which are scattered on the unknown sea of the future; these serve to develop the Jew's mystical tendencies until they become his motive-power.

In a century, then, full of Messianic rumors, with the

* Saehs, in his "Religiöse Poesie der Juden in Spanien" well describes the difference between the Jews of Spain and of Italy. See p. 180 ff.

† Compare S. Munk, Mélanges, p. 511: "Les Juifs, comme nation ou comme société religieuse, ne jouent dans l'histoire de la philosophie qu'un rôle secondaire." Zunz, Gesammelte Schriften, I. 27, A. 1: "Die Philosophie ist bei den Juden nie zu einer festen Disciplin geworden."

followers of Sabbathai Zevi scattering on every side their poisonous seed; in a land where art and religion walked hand in hand with Mysticism, and the solemn chant, the awe-inspiring symbol, the mystic ecclesiastical rite found their countless worshippers, a poet and mystic appeared, whose life we are about to describe. A young, ardent poet, with his mind full of subtle harmonies, which the coarser natures about him perhaps could never hear; a Jewish enthusiast, who wrote Hebrew with the grace and majesty of Jehuda Halevi: such a nature, so gentle, gifted, and sensitive, was forced to encounter all the bitterness of persecution. No wonder that the poet could not cease his mystical rhapsodies, when he was assailed on every side. In the life of an inspired Jew, the history of his nation is reflected. His trials and struggles are often national rather than individual. If it be true that the Jews brought with them from their Babylonian exile the names of the angels—how sublime the deeper truth that this thought suggests!—it is as true that every fresh trial, every new wandering, only developed in a greater degree the mystical tendencies of Moses Chaim Luzzatto.

At Padua, in the year 1707, Moses Chaim Luzzatto * was born. His father was a wealthy merchant of good repute, who dealt in silks and produce. Of his mother, the name Diamante is alone preserved. Of her intellectual abilities, nothing is known, although from the fact of the son composing poems in her honor and praise, it may be inferred that he had every reason to be grateful to her.† Of his family life the details are scanty. As a child, he displayed an unusual fondness for books, and his quiet, studious ways soon awakened the attention of his father. As he had soon made himself acquainted with his father's library, the latter bought new books for

* The chief and most impartial source for Luzzatto's biography is Almanzi, כרם חמד, III., p. 112 ff. For other information, compare Girondi, כרם חמד II., p. 54 ff. Graetz, X., p. 369 ff. Short notices appear in Jost's Geschichte, II., p. 469, which account he enlarged in his Annalen, Jahrg, I.; in Zedner's Auswahl historischer Stücke, p. 375; in Landshuth, Amude ha-Aboda, II., 222; in Busch's Jahrbuch, VI., in a sketch of the Luzzatto family, from the pen of Samuel David Luzzatto. Delitzsch and Letteris, in their Introduction to the drama, מגדל עז (Leipzig, 1837), have given a biography of Luzzatto, based on Girondi's work, which is incomplete. Delitzsch, both in this Introduction and in his "Geschichte der jüdischen Poesie," has excellently described the poetical genius of L. In Jacob Emden's תורת הקנאות the description is one-sided. See Löw's Ben Chananja, 1863, p. 567, in a sketch by N. Brüll; Philippson's A. Z d. J., 1837; Geiger's Zeitschrift, 1837, p. 336, Orient, Literaturblatt, 1845, 262.

† In his essay on "Namen der Juden," (Gesam. Schriften II) as well as in "Zur Geschichte und Literatur," p. 74, Zunz describes hymnes which were current among Jews in the Middle Ages; few, however, are more melodious than that of Luzzatto's mother, Diamante.

him, and secured besides a private teacher for the youth in Hebrew and Latin. The teacher, Isaiah Bassan, saw with pride the industry of his pupil, and allowed him to rove at will through his books. Bassan, who was at that time member of the Rabbinical Council, of Padua, relates how the youthful Luzzatto despised the usual sports of boys of his age, and how he was wont to visit his library at an early hour in the morning. Spurred on by his teacher, his talents rapidly developed.* In his fourteenth year, he wrote an elegy on Isaac Vita Cantarini.† In his sixteenth year, he composed a drama, "Samson and the Philistines."‡ In 1727, he wrote a rhetoric, classic in its style and treatment, "Leshon Limudim."‖ About this time, too, his dramatic work appeared, "Migdal Oz"§ so closely following Guarini's

* Luzzatto's precocity recalls the early maturity of Jehuda Halevi, whose youthful talents Moses Ibn Ezra highly praised (Dukes, Moses Ibn Ezra, 98, and S. D. Luzzatto, Kerem Chemed, IV., 96) Ibn Gabirol in his youth was a full-fledged poet (Graetz, VI., 28.)

† Compare Zedner. p 146. Some verses are given in Delitzsch's Prolegomena ad Luzzatti Migdal Oz. p. 19.

‡ This production is still in MS., and contained in the third part of the *Leshon Limudim.*

‖ The first part, consisting of eleven chapters, appeared first at Mantua, 1727, and then at Lemberg, 1810. The title, לשון למודים, has been adopted by toher writers; for instance, by Eljakim b. Jacob Melammed, Amsterdam, 1686; also by Jachia Ibn David ben Salomo, Constantinople, 1506. Compare Steinschneider, Bibliograph-Handbuch, 554, 983. Compare Delitzsch, Geschichte der jüdischen Poesie, p. 90, note 3.

§ Issued by Delitzsch and Letteris, Leipzig, 1837. The influence of the

"Pastor Fido," that many expressions are taken bodily from the Italian model. Before his twentieth year, he had composed one hundred and fifty Psalms, which closely imitate the Biblical.*

Here now is a delicate nature, young, inexperienced, and full of the warmth and enthusiasm of the poet, but living in a world of thought of his own, in which fate played no part. In his early poetical attempts, there are perhaps sad premonitions, but these have too artificial a tone to lead us to believe that the poet was expressing his ripe convictions. Indeed, it would be unjust to demand from him at this stage of development the maturity of the man. The poet is scarcely released from his school-tasks, and he has little thought of a world outside of his father's house and his teacher's library. Nevertheless, his youthful productions breathe a certain amount of del-

Italian school is perceptible also in Luzzatto's later poetical work. See Appendix, I.

* A Gnostic of the second century, Bardesanes, also imitated the Psalms in one hundred and fifty productions of his own. See A. Hahn, Bardesanes gnosticus Syrorum primus hymnologus, Leipzig, 1819; also A. Merx, *Bardesanes von Edessa*, Halle, 1863, and Hilgenfeld, *Bardesanes der letzte Gnostiker*, Leipzig, 1864. Also Cureton's Spicilegium Syriacum: containing remains of Bardesanes, etc.... London, 1855.

In regard to Luzzatto's Psalms, Delitzsch, in his Geschichte, d. j. Poesie, writes that the Psalms are in Prague in MS. On the other hand, Zunz, Gesammelte Schriften I. 24, A 4, observes that "ein unsinniger Rabbiner L's treffliche Psalmen in dem einzig vorhandenen Manuscripte verbrennen liess, und zwar aus Eifer für die Davidischen." Two Psalms are preserved in Bikure ha-Itim, 1825, p. 56; 1826, p. 99.

icacy and feeling, which is full of promise for the future. They are fresh in tone, attractive in treatment, and the rhythm is pleasing. When the poet leaves the puppet-figures of his imagination, and treats of the majesty of God, his muse is eloquent.*

There existed at that time in Padua a certain society ("מבקשי"ר"), whose members cultivated with zeal the study of the Kabbala.† Bassan was a highly esteemed member of this society: most probably his Kabbalistical tendencies can be traced to the influence exerted over him by his step-father, R. Benjamin Kohen, of Reggio, who was a zealous supporter of Sabbathai Zevi. Naturally enough, Bassan's library was well supplied with Kabbalistical books, and among others Luzzatto found Isaac Luria's *Ez Chaim* ‡— a book which was not without influence on the young poet. Luria's life and early death must also have left a powerful impression on his sensitive mind. Luzzatto made such rapid progress in Kabbalistical studies, that he was soon initiated into the society by his teacher. With three friends in particular he appears

* Graetz, X., p. 371. † See Appendix, note 2.

‡ Isaac Luria's eventful life is graphically described by Graetz, IX., 437 ff.— his mystical work, פרי עץ חיים, a treatise in four chapters on the mystical sense of the prayers and commandments, on prophecy and the holy spirit, on penitence and repentance, was issued by Is. Satanow, Korez, 1785. Luzzatto published an introduction to this work of Luria's, under the title, פתחי חכמה, embracing 38 short rules for the study of the Kabbala.

to have been in close intimacy in the sessions of the society: Israel Hiskiah Trevis, the physician, Moses David Vali, and Jacob Hasak, afterwards Rabbi in Padua.*

It is not necessary to describe the sessions of this Kabbalistical society, or attempt to fathom the mystical subjects which were discussed. The questions which were asked, the debates which arose, were grave and weighty of course: the more illogical and incomprehensible the speakers, the more were they filled with the emanation of the Spirit.† To be clear and intelligible may have been regarded as heresy: to be vague and incoherent was perhaps an infallible sign of inspiration.

The mystical disputations which Luzzatto, as a member of the society, was privileged to hear, exercised a marked effect upon his susceptible mind. He soon displayed a fondness for rapt, theosophical broodings, took a prominent part in the proceedings, and allowed the sessions of the society to be held at his own house. En-

* Ephraim Luzzatto praises Trevis and Vale in his בני הנעורים, in the following witty way.

[Trevis] לא בן ברת משה כישראל
[Vale] לא קם בישראל כמשה ול

Jost observes (Annalen I, 32) that he is in possession of a MS., 8000 pages, for the most part of a Kabbalistical tenor, from the pen of Trevis.

† Zunz calls the "pilpulistical" study of Talmud, which is still a popular method in Russia and many parts of Germany, "verwünschte Klopffechterei" (Gesam. Schriften, 1, 29, A. 1). One might be induced to employ a still stronger epithet to characterize these Kabbalistical *seances*.

couraged by the applause of his associates, he began secretly to write Kabbalistical fancies. At first they were only stylistic imitations of the Sohar, which, perhaps, he composed simply for his amusement. Grown bolder as he saw how perfect were his imitations, he wrote a second Sohar,* and dreamed of his Messianic character. It remains to be proved, however, whether he really believed what he so readily and recklessly wrote. As if ashamed of his authorship, he carefully concealed his Soharistic reveries, and nobody had any idea of his mystical compositions.†

At that time, when Luzzatto had barely reached his twentieth year, he enjoyed an excellent reputation in Padua. His poetical gifts were not allowed to remain unused. He wrote an elegy‡ on the death of R. Raphael Cracovia, of Venice, in which appear, among the rest, the Muses, Heaven, Earth, and departed spirits, in a production consisting of three hundred and twenty seven verses. He wrote also a poetical reverie on the death of Rabbi Raphael Isaac Chaim. Besides these, he issued a collection of songs, "Chanuchat ha-Aron," for the dedication of the Portuguese Synagogue, in Padua.

If Luzzatto had succeeded in keeping his proficiency in the Kabbala a profound secret, the result might not have

* אור תגנזא. † Almanzi, p. 115. ‡ Venice, 1726.

been so tragic. He might have continued imitating the Sohar his entire life, and nobody would have criticised his course—provided he formed no school of his own, and sought no recruits to propagate his doctrines. But unfortunately he could not long retain the secret of his skill. One day he told some kindred spirits the precious fact, and his companions were thrown into ecstasy at the revelation. Among them was a certain Jekutiel,* of Wilna, who studied medicine at Padua. This Jekutiel was so enraptured with Luzzatto's ideas that, unknowingly, he was the first to bring suspicion upon the youthful mystic.† For in 1729, he wrote letters to R. Mordecai Jafe, at Vienna, and to R. Joshua Heschel, at Wilna, in which he spoke glowingly of Luzzatto's abilities. Luzzatto himself soon appeared as an advocate of Mysticism. Accidentally he read Leon Modena's ‡ anti-Kabbalistical work "Ari Nohem." Aroused by the tone and method of Modena's book, he published a polemic work, "The Inquirer and the Kabbalist,"‖ in which he

* In regard to Jekutiel, compare Finn, in his Chronicles of Wilna, קריה נאמנה p. 113.
ותרבק נפש יקותיאל אחריו... ובהפעלות נפשו על הגרולות אשר מפי לוצאטי מהר להוריע מזה

† See Zedner, p. 276.

‡ In regard to Leon Modena, compare Graetz X. p 141, and Geiger's "Leon da Modena," Breslau, 1856. Julius Fürst edited (Leipzig, 1840) Modena's ארי נהם

‖ Printed for the first time, in an incomplete form, Lemberg, 1800. M. S. Freystadt issued it in a complete form, with an introduction. חוקר וקבל Königsberg, 1840.

violently attacked Modena. Whether his arguments were conclusive or not, his Kabbalistical tendencies were for the first time publicly exposed and awakened the attention of the rabbis of the day.*

The rabbis of Venice, as soon as the Kabbalistical efforts of Luzzatto became known to them, at once proceeded to vigorous action. It was only about half a century since the death of Sabbathai Zevi (1676), and his followers had still their bands of adherents. If the rabbis could not extirpate the Sabbathianists, they could at any rate endeavor to check fresh accessions to their number. In the glowing phrases of the youth of twenty-three, they fancied they detected a revival of the doctrines of Sabbathai Zevi. Quickly they wrote to the rabbis of Italy and Germany, not forgetting the zealous Moses Chages,† then at Altona—whose father Jacob Chages (1620–1674) had been such a violent opponent of Sabbathai Zevi—and informed them of the latest heresy that had broken out at Padua. Luzzatto, who well knew that Chages was a sworn foe of Sabbathianism, thought it advisable to write first to him. Urgently asking him

* Bassan was also not favorably impressed with the aim and influence of Modena's book. He writes emphatically in Kerem Chemed ii., p. 63

לְהַכְחִישׁ חָכְמַת הָאֱמֶת וְלִדְבֹּר הוֹעֵר....וְעָלָיו
סוֹמְכִים כָּל זָרִים וְכָל עוֹשֵׂי רִשְׁעָה׃

† Graetz, X., Note 6, lxxxvi., ff.

not to misinterpret his polemic work against Modena, he asserted that he was no disciple of Zevi, and requested him to put himself into communication with Isaiah Bassan, for proof of the fact that he was no Sabbathianist Bassan, in the early part of the year, 1730, had written a defence of Luzzatto, which he had forwarded to the rabbis of Venice.

The reply of Chages was exceedingly cool and brief. He warned Luzzatto and his particular worshipper Jekutiel, to be careful and cease their Kabbalistical studies. Luzzatto was so dissatisfied at the tone of Chages' note, that he wrote to the Rabbis of Venice a lengthy letter,* from which we make these extracts: —

"Never did I form a school of my own, nor did I ever hold public sessions: but I studied quietly with a few friends. I strove not in quest of vain things, but wish to serve God according to my powers, just as it is the duty of every Israelite to do. As it has been the will of God to make public my efforts, I admit gladly that I have succeeded in sowing good seed and teaching others to the best of my ability. Is that any sufficient reason for such a terrible excitement? Has any one found in me or my friends the slightest wrong? When this or that appears beyond the powers of conception of many,

* Almanzi, p. 142.

come to me and I will give information. Why do you make such a storm? Only one of you need condescend to visit me, either to hear the truth or to convince me of my error.**** I do not say, accept my opinion or believe other trusty men, but examine yourselves and judge according to your own opinion.

"However, I swear in the name of God, who loves me, that I write this at the bidding of a higher power, to sooth all strife. And now let happen what may, even if bound at the altar, I will never renounce my pious sense, and through fear of men forsake the behests of God."

Luzzatto found time, at the very juncture when Chages and his supporters were beginning their attack, to write poems in honor of several of his friends * who had received the title of Doctors of Philosophy and Medicine.

To one of these friends, Emanuel Calbo, he sent on 1 Adar, 5490 (February 1730), a remarkable letter, together with a page from his "Sohar Tinjana," which he begged Calbo to forward to the rabbis of Livorno.

"It is true," wrote Luzzatto, "that in the year 1727 God sent me a Saint from Heaven, who revealed to me

* Elia Concili, Solomon Lampronti, Jacob Heilpron, Emanuel Calbo. A reputed copy of the poem in honor of Calbo has been kindly forwarded by Dr. Isaiah Luzzatto, of Padua; but it is somewhat defective and is hardly of merit enough to be given here.

daily great secrets, which I wrote down every day. He then gave me many precepts (תיקונים), and told me that Elijah and God would converse with me. And so it happened! Punctually at the appointed time Elijah and other saints, who are wont to reveal the secrets of God to the God-fearing soul, appeared in my presence." We need not translate this letter further. Only to clearly does he acknowledge that these holy spirits dictated to him his Kabbalistical writings. He had resolved to speak of this matter neither to relative nor friend; and it was only "at the command of a higher Power that he had revealed the connection between the spirits and himself to his intimate friends, Isaac Marini and Israel Trevis."

Calbo answered in a friendly tone. Although he regretted that Luzzatto had divulged the story of his proficiency in the Kabbala, still he had written to the Rabbinical Council of Livorno at Luzzatto's request, and transmitted the page from his Sohar. In a few weeks, (Adar 21st,) the Livorno rabbis forwarded a vigorous letter to Luzzatto. They assured him that they considered his claim to inspiration as wholly baseless. Unless he furnished stronger proofs, they would be compelled to place him on a rank with Sabbathai Zevi and Nehemia Chajon.*

* Graetz, X., 342, 357, 366.

Luzzatto lost no time in replying, and his indignant note, dated 5 Nisan (April), began with an explanation of the page from his Sohar, which he had forwarded. He next proves the purity of his doctrines by renouncing all claim to the dignity of a prophet. He had never attempted to prove his teachings by means of miracles. He wished only to live in a quiet way.*

Meanwhile Moses Chages had not been idle. On Adar 25th, he wrote to various prominent rabbis, Joseph Ergas, at Livorno, Simson Morpurgo, at Altona, and Abraham Segre, at Casale, in order to devise a concerted plan of action against Luzzatto. He wanted them to make Luzzatto choose either of two courses: to abandon Mysticism, or to emigrate to Palestine. But Chages failed to incite them to any energetic action. All his efforts to arouse the rabbis of Venice were also fruitless. He was, however, more successful in Germany, many German rabbis seconding his zeal at this juncture by pronouncing the ban against Luzzatto. No Jew was to hold converse with him, and his writings were to be consigned to the flames.†

Despite the writ of excommunication, Luzzatto sought to defend himself in a letter to Morpurgo (Iyar 11th, 1730). He complained bitterly of the injustice of his

* Almanzi, p. 147, Note 67.

† Almanzi, p. 150, Note 73.

chief enemy, Chages, who had attacked him as a follower of Sabbathai Zevi. Morpurgo's answer was brief and pointed. He advised Luzzatto by all means to travel to Palestine, where he would enjoy comparative rest. Without the slightest chance of misleading his disciples, in the Holy Land, beneath a sacred sky, and in scenes hallowed by such sublime memories, he could indulge in his reveries as long as he pleased. He need not dwell longer in Italy, to ridicule and insult his pious coreligionists. In this advice to travel to Palestine, there was perhaps more irony than cordiality. It was only in Palestine that a Messiah could be expected to appear. Accordingly, if Luzzatto pretended to have a Messianic mission, Palestine was the proper spot to begin his activity, or—make himself a laughing stock, and put an end to his pretensions.*

Bassan's defence of his pupil had made little impression in Venice. On the contrary, it seems to have awakened the Rabbinical Council to some show of action against Luzzatto. He was requested, in company with R. Emanuel Ballalios and R. Mose Menachem Merani, to go to Padua and subject his pupil to a strict examination. On Ab 3d (July), Luzzatto was summoned to appear in

* Not sixty years before had Isaac Luria betaken himself to Palestine, for the express purpose of ushering in a Messianic kingdom, but he died of a fever before that event happened.

presence of his teacher, and he solemnly renounced his mystical reveries, promising besides to study the Kabbala no more. He delivered his writings into the possession of Bassan, who packed them in two cases. So complete was the reconciliation, that Luzzatto received ordination (סמיכה) from the rabbis. The first act in the drama was over, and it closed with wedding bells. Luzzatto married Zippora, the daughter of R. David Finzi, of Mantua.

It was not long, however, before Luzzatto returned with fresh ardor to his Kabbalistical studies.* Whatever may have forced him to this step, it is clear that his mystical tendencies were as marked as ever. In 1734, he completed his "First Principles of the Science of Truth,"† and various poems for Passover and Pentecost, of a decidedly Kabbalistical tenor. Bassan was powerless to restrain Luzzatto's zeal, and the story of his relapse into Mysticism became widely circulated. The rabbis of Venice were particularly angered, and they sent three agents to Padua to examine into the whole affair.‡ The rumor spread that certain magical instru-

* Gracts thinks (X. p. 377) that an unpleasantness in the family and business troubles caused him to devote himself again to Mysticism. Almanzi, however, is silent as to the cause.

† סיכללים וראשונים לחכמת האמת

‡ There is a slight inaccuracy in Almanzi's dates at this point. The agents, he writes, were sent the 15th of Heshvan, 1734, and the baa was pronounc d on

ments had been found in Luzzatto's house,* as if he were a charlatan. Luzzatto was not disposed to play the coward, and showed much spirit at this juncture. He knew what enemies he had to deal with—who had profited so well by the example of the times as to have bought a spy,† to watch his every movement. They were apparently incensed because Luzzatto had attacked Venice's former rabbi, Leon Modena. Had Modena still lived, he would have valued their championship at its proper worth, and declined to accept their assistance. Jacob Emden, whose outspoken nature spared neither friend nor foe, accounts for the sudden zeal of the Venetian rabbis in this way. They had previously showed a degree of consideration, out of regard for Luzzatto's wealth ; now, in the hour of his distress they fiercely assailed him.‡ It peculiarly jarred upon their pious feelings that he could so cleverly imitate the Psalms. Had he composed sonnets in honor of Joseph Karo ‖ how unbounded would have been their delight !

the 8th of Heshvan 1734 (p. 120 1), but the date of the ban must clearly have been later.

* Bassan's letter in the *Kerem Chemed*, II., 63, proves what a character two of these agents had. Four years later they talked about the magical instruments, and then they contradicted each other's evidence.

† Graetz, X., 378.

‡ See the telling passage from Emden's *Torat ha-Kenaoth*, cited by Graetz, p. 378.

‖ Joseph Karo is the celebrated codifier of Rabbinical Judaism, whose *Schulchan Aruch* has played a prominent part in the history of modern Judaism.

Luzzatto, who previously had been gentleness itself, now showed not the least sign of yielding. In vain did the agents redouble their censure. In vain they described the consequences of his obstinacy. Their zeal made not the least impression upon him; for he asserted, with a considerable amount of justice, that he, a native of Padua, did not recognize the authority of the Rabbinical Council of Venice. The agents withdrew, and soon* the rabbis of Venice pronounced the ban against him, and condemned his writings to the flames. The writ of excommunication is signed by rabbis of Frankfort, Furth, Hamburg Altona, Glogau, Amsterdam, Lemberg, Cracow, Trani, Berlin, Posen, Krotoschin, Breslau, and different cities in Italy. Their names appear in the ban,† which proves in the first place how vast an influence the rabbis exercised at that time, and in the second, how widely spread was the desire to prevent a revival of the doctrines of Sabbathai Zevi.

Scarcely 27 years of age, Luzzatto deemed it necessary to leave his fatherland. With violence he tore himself from parents, wife, son, brothers, sisters, and friends. Painful must have been the parting from his disciples, as

* The date in Almanzi, Heshvan the 6th, 1734, is not trustworthy, for the reason given in a former note.

† The ban is given in full in *Kerem Chemed* III. p. 156 f.

if, in the hurried farewell, other thoughts had filled his mind, and prevented the full expression of his feelings, he wrote a letter to his followers, dated Botzen, Kislev 9th, 1734, about a week after his departure from Padua, Kislev 1st, (Dec.) This letter is short enough, but expressive and eloquent. He complains neither of the attacks of his enemies nor of the sufferings he has to undergo. Silent as to his own anguish, he bids them continue steadily in their labors, and asks them to pray that God may lead him aright. A rare spirit of patience and devotion breathes through this note, and the well chosen Hebrew words sound like a Psalm. The second act is over, and Luzzatto grasps a pilgrim's staff.

He wandered first to Frankfort on the Main. The rabbi of Frankfort, Jacob Cohen, of Prague, did not receive him in a very friendly way. He questioned him with so much pertinacity that Luzzatto began to lose his courage. "Who are you?" asked the rabbi, who had heard of the mystical tendencies of the Paduan. "What do you want? Where do you come from? Do you wish still further to scatter the seeds of Mysticism? Will you never cease your reveries?" This unexpected reception had a strange influence upon Luzzatto. The events of the past few weeks had been a fearful strain upon his system: and now Luzzatto seemed to have

some conception of the dark future, as he stood before the Rabbi Cohen, rejected, scorned, as if he bore a Cain's mark on his brow. In his despair, his mind almost lost its balance; for on the 17th of Tebeth (January), 1735. he wrote a confession of sins. Such was the ridicule which was aroused by the ban and this voluntary confession, that he was obliged hurriedly to leave Frankfort.

Fortunately, Luzzatto next settled in Amsterdam. It was certainly bold for him,outlawed and excommunicated, to visit a city which not a century before had been rendered memorable by the excommunication of Spinoza. His Portuguese coreligionists, however, seemed to have profited by the experiences of their fathers: for they received him so heartily that his parents and family left Padua to reside at Amsterdam. In the Dutch capital, he soon acquired an excellent reputation as teacher; while the wealthiest families, as if touched by the story of his sorrows, vied with each other to do him honor. Despite his high social position, Luzzatto did not lose the simplicity of his character: to add to his means, he busied himself in polishing optical glasses—as Spinoza had done. In his happy family circle, surrounded by friends and admirers, his future seemed propitious enough. And some of his pupils—David Franco Men-

dez,* for instance, were destined to add to the reputation of their master.

Meanwhile Luzzatto had maintained an active correspondence with his friends at Padua. Particularly fervent were the letters between him and Bassan. He admonished them all to continue their studies zealously, despite every annoyance and persecution. His letters remained no secret, and as soon as the Rabbis of Venice and Padua became acquainted with the fact, they bitterly accused Isaiah Bassan of duplicity and treachery. They asserted, too, that he had forwarded Luzzatto's Kabbalistical writings to Amsterdam. Bassan attempted to defend himself from the accusation: but there is strong presumptive evidence that he had cognizance of the transfer of the cases of books from Padua to Frankfort in 1736, and then to Amsterdam. Soon thereafter, Bassan died at an advanced age: he had undoubtedly fostered Luzzatto's Kabbalistical tendencies, but his zealous championship of his pupil proves his sincerity. In 1739, Luzzatto's parents returned to Padua, with a letter which he wrote to his friends, in which he assured them that he was still an ardent adherent of the Kabbala.

His few years' residence in Amsterdam had not been

* Among other works, Mendez issued a translation of Racine's Athalie, under the title גמול עתליה, Amsterdam, 1770, Vienna, 1800. Compare Delitzsch, "Geschichte der jüd. Poesie," p. 111 ff.

unproductive. In 1740, he issued his "Messilat Jesharim," which is free from Kabbalistical fancies.* This work on Ethics is the author's clearest vindication. The book itself is comparatively little known, but no correct estimate of Luzzatto can be formed until the work has been subjected to a careful examination. In a small compass of forty-two pages (Mantua edition), the author considers the chief subjects of Ethics, with a careful analysis of each; and his remarks are often characterized by vigor and pungency. In 1743, he issued his masterpiece, a work† with which his name will be always associated—"La Jesharim Tehilla." Scarcely sixteen years before, he wrote his "Migdal Oz"—since that time how varied had been his experiences! The work possesses an indescribable charm, not alone from its subject-matter, which reminds one alike of the joys and pains of life; but from its artistic form, which reveals the master on

* ספר מסילת ישרים. Printed Amsterdam, 1740, Zolkiew. 1766. Mantua, 1781, Luneville, 1806, Zolkiew, 1808, Leipzig, 1846. The work is purely ethical, not Kabbalistical;—as Almanzi justly writes (p. 167, note 122), אין בו דברי סודות בלל יעקר. The remark of Gosche (Wissensehaft. Jahresbericht Z. D. M. G. XX.) in noticing the Koenigsberg edition of the Messilat Jesharim, 1858, is rather strange: "Stark mit poëtischen kabbalistischen Elementen versetzt."

† לישרים תהלה. A drama in honor of the wedding of á pupil, Jacob de Chaves, to Rachel Davega Enriques. Printed very often. Amsterdam, 1743, Berlin, 1780, Lemberg, 1799, 1813, 1823, Lisa, ——. Also in Martinet's תפארת ישראל, Bamberg, 1837. Even Letteris, in his edition of the Migdal Oz, who praises so immoderately that early drama, confesses that Luzzatto borrowed many of the expressions in his later poem from Guarini.

every page,* and proves how flexible a language the Hebrew is. The characters in the drama are no mere puppets: the author has drawn largely, not on his imagination alone, but on his varied experiences; and in the reflections which run through the work, the ripeness and intensity of Luzzatto's nature are stamped. A proof of his versatility may be gathered from the fact that the year previously he wrote an introduction to the study of the Talmud.†

Just at this time, when Luzzatto's future was full of promise, it cannot be denied that he still persistently wrote Kabbalistical books.‡ It is difficult to account for such a tendency at this period in his life. There was some justification for his Kabbalistical reveries when fate pressed heavily upon him, and he had to encounter bitter enmity: but now when his affairs were so prosperous, and he enjoyed the love and esteem of his Amsterdam coreligionists, —at a time like this to cling to the mystic

* Artistic in particular is the imitation of the echo in Part III. Delitzsch describes the book in this eloquent way (Geschichte der jüd. Poesie, p. 92): "Der Styl von La-Jesharim Tehilla hält sich durchweg im Tone der biblischen poëtischen Diction, wo sie am schärfsten *nuancirt* ist. Alle Würzblumen der biblischen Poësie stehen hier wie auf eiu Beet zusammengedrängt: die Sprache ist nicht eine Mosaik aus biblischen Phrasen, sondern ein Email aus den feinsten und zugleich seltensten biblischen Eleganzen."

† ספר דרך התבונות, published at Amsterdam, 1742, Offenbach, 1788, Lemberg, 1833. There is no mysticism in this work. Compare Almanzi, 168, note 123. אין בו עסק בנסתרות.

‡ See Almanzi, 167, note 125.

reveries of the past,—it was a problem difficult to be solved. It lasted not long, however, before Luzzatto himself solved the problem. Shortly after the completion of his drama, "La Jesharim Tehilla," he went to Palestine. Perhaps the words* of Jehuda Halevi:—"Whoever has trodden four ells of ground in Palestine is sure of future bliss," beckoned him on. Some decisive step was necessary to calm the unrest of his spirit. Whether he wished to play the role of a Messiah in Palestine, is a question not to be seriously considered, when one reflects on his unassuming, retiring disposition. It is possible, however, that his followers might have hailed him as Messiah, had his stay in Palestine† been protracted. Of his experiences in the Holy Land, nothing is known, save that in the spring (26th Iyar) of 1746 he died of fever at Akka. His family also fell victims to the scourge which had carried him off. He was buried with honor at Tiberias.

* Compare Kusari (Cassell's second edition), II., §22, p. 124, where other passages of a similar tenor are given.

† The part played by the idea of the Heavenly Jerusalem may really have incited Luzzatto to undertake the journey to Palestine. This Heavenly Jerusalem idea is well worthy of a careful study. The expression occurs in the Epistle to the Hebrews, XII., 22 (Ἰερουσαλὴμ ἐπουρανίῳ). The analogous expoession, ἡ ἄνω Ἰερουσαλήμ, occurs in the New Testament (Gal. IV., 26), and in the Talmud Taanith, 5, a., where the words are used, ירושלם של מעלה. As to the Kabbalistical origin of the idea, compare the extract from R. Nathan ben Shemuel's Commentary on the Pentateuch, in Schiller-Szinnessy's Catalogue of Hebrew MSS., in Cambridge, Vol. I., p. 191.

The characters of the past are generally criticised either as giants or as dwarfs. Such a method of criticism is clearly false: they were men like ourselves; and the crown they have won, the work they have accomplished, are all the more precious and sacred to us because we regard them as men. Luzzatto was also neither a giant nor a dwarf; but only a weak man, whose mind lacked firmness, and who, despite the nobility of his character, was too easily influenced by his associates. The very gifts, too, with which nature had adorned him, his sensibility, susceptibility, and imaginative power,—were dangerous. A delicate flower, however fragrant, can not escape the whirlwind: its delicacy is its destruction. There was a certain element of inflammability in the mind of Luzzatto, due to the preponderating imaginative faculty. The balance wheel was wanting, and his mind was in unstable equilibrium.

Luzzatto was indeed a mystic; but no impostor.* His enemies attacked him as a follower of Sabbathai Zevi: on them rested the burden of proof, and they have failed to produce arguments conclusive enough to establish the truth of their charge. It was not entirely without

* In Busch, Jahrbuch VI., p. 109, S. D. Luzzatto writes of the subject of our sketch, that the taste and sound judgment displayed in his works, "hindern mich ihn für einen fanatiker, einen Schwärmer, oder einen Betrüger, zu halten, wie so viele es glauben."

justification that Chages and his adherents so violently opposed Luzzatto: for they knew with what peculiarly unfortunate results too great a zeal for the Kabbata was attended. It might have been possible, nevertheless, to have appeased the strife without a Venetian spy or a ban of excommunication. Certain other reasons for the hostility of the rabbis may be justly asserted. It is not necessary to adopt the opinion of Samuel David Luzzatto,* that Moses Chaim Luzzatto used the Kabbala to accomplish a needed reform in Judaism. From a few thoughts which occur in his ethical work it may be readily imagined how violent was his opposition to formalism. In the introduction to his "Messilat Jesharim," he writes pointedly against those who place their chief reliance upon the recital of many Psalms, long confessions of sin, and strict fasting.† Such instruments to the attainment of piety he considers senseless (אין השכל נח בהם) In beginning his chapter on piety, he alludes to the necessity of clearly explaining that term, because so much sham piety abounds ‡ A far more significant passage is this. There is a sentence in Proverbs, ii. 4, which

* Busch, p. 109.

† See the הקדמה to his "Messilat Jesharim," where he refers particularly to

מזמורים הרבה
ווידוים ארוכים מאד צומות קשים
וטבילות קרח ושלג.

Compare, too, p. 25.

‡ בשם חסידים ואינם אלא גלמי חסידות בלי תואר יבלי צורה וכל הקון.....פרק יח

reads, אם תבקשנה בכסף....או תבין יראת יי. We read not, however—so adds Luzzatto in his Introduction—או תבין דינים or או תבין הלכות. That Luzzatto should have regarded the *Dinim* and the *Halachoth* simply as secondary, and that he, an Italian Jew, should have so boldly advocated individuality in Judaism,—assuredly these were views which might have been obnoxious to some, although they are not at all foreign to the spirit of Judaism, known at its purest and its best.

But let us leave Luzzatto the Mystic; let us forget the stormy scenes of his life; let us think of him only as a Hebrew poet, in whose hands the language of the prophets gained fresh significance. The exquisite grace, the versatile skill, the consummate power with which he employed Hebrew in the expression of his thought,—this is perhaps his highest merit in the opinion of those who in our day are striving to awaken interest in Hebrew studies. Under his master-touch, the holy language acquires the eloquence of old. In the strains he evokes, we think unconsciously of the divine singers of the past. In the purity and sublimity of his thoughts, the chords of the prophets are half stirred from their long silence. Thus a language revives under the electric influence of genius. Thus a religion, worshipping forms and shadows, awakens to realities and developments, when the Mas-

ter touches the apparently dead bones and bids them live again!

APPENDIX.

I.

LUZZATTO AND GUARINI.

In a letter, under date of Oct. 23d, 1877, Prof. Fleischer, of Leipzig kindly calls attention to his review of Delitzsch's edition of the *Migdal Oz*, which was published in Gersdorf's *Repertorium der Gesammten Litteratur*, Leipzig, 1839, vol. 19, pp. 140, 145. We give the following pertinent paragraph from the note:

"Sie werden, glaube ich, wohl thun, wenn sie in ihrer Schrift über Luzzatto denselben Standpunkt nüchterner Beurtheilung einnehmen, auf den ich mich in jener Anzeige gestellt habe, allerdings nur in Beziehung auf den über Gebühr gepriesenen Migdal Oz, der, bei Lichte besehen, ein grosses Plagiat ist; aber auch die ganze literarische Thätigkeit des Mannes, in der sich Licht und Schatten auf wunderliche Weise vermischen, verlangt eine vorurtheilsfreie, ruhig abwägende Kritik."

In the review in Gersdorf,* Professor Fleischer clearly

* Kindly forwarded by Dr. M. Gaster of Bucharest.

proves how much Luzzatto is indebted to Guarini. He affirms that the Migdal Oz is a condensed travesty of the Pastor Fido. The story, the action, the dialogue, the metre, the most important characters, are really the same. Ram is Montano, Schelomith Amarillis, Sifra Silvio, Schalam Mirtillo, Ajja Dorinda, Ada Carisca, the prophet Eri the Satyr, Ana Titiro, Kabul Lupino, Zadok Nicandro, Heman Tirenio, Schimei Ergasto. According to the critic, the following table may give an idea of the composite character of the Migdal Oz and its relation to the Pastor Fido.

M. O.		P. F.
Act 1, Sc. 1, 2,	=	Act 1, Sc. 2, 3.
" " 3,	=	" " 4, in part.
" " 4,	=	" " 5.
Act 2, Sc. 1,	=	Act 2, Sc. 1, in part.
" " 2,	=	" " 2, 3.
" " 3,	=	" " 5.
" " 4,	=	" " 6.
Act 3, Sc. 1,	=	Act 3, Sc. 1, 2, 3.
" " 2,	=	" " 4, 5.
" " 3,	=	Vision in 11 Dan.
" " 4, 5.	=	Act 3, Sc. 6, 7. in form
Act 4, Sc. 2,	=	Act 4, Sc. 5.
" " 3,	=	In the style of Job.
" " 4,	=	Act 4, Sc. 8, A. 5, S. 2.
" " 5,	=	Act 5. Sc. 3, 6.
" " 6,	=	" " 8.
" " 7,	=	" " 9, 10.

Without referring in this connection to the defects in language and style, as well as the imitation of Italian phrases, in the Migdal Oz, of which Fleischer gives some examples in his critique, it is clear that no estimate of Luzzatto's youthful production would be fair, which does not admit his great dependence on Guarini.

But it is not difficult to find an apology for the young poet. The Pastor Fido, first produced at Turin in 1585, became very popular in the 16th and 17th centuries, and

even in the 18th century, as Schlegel observes (History of Literature, Bohn's Ed, p. 255, Note), its influence can be traced in Allan Ramsay's exquisite Scottish pastoral drama "The Gentle Shepherd." It was natural for the young Luzzatto to be fired by enthusiasm, as he read the glowing verse of Guarini; and it is his highest praise that in the Migdal Oz, travesty or not, there is not a trace of Guarini's licentiousness. The young Hebrew wrote for a different race than the Italian.

But even if the charge of plagiarism be juster than that of unconscious imitation, Guarini himself is guilty of the same offence. His Pastor Fido closely imitates Tasso's Aminta, and Hallam (Literature 11, 247) accuses Guarini of having travestied Tasso. In the critical edition of Guarini's Pastor Fido (Milan, 1807), copious Italian notes are added, which incontestibly prove Guarini's dependence upon earlier Italian writers, Boccaccio, Petrarch, Tasso, Ariosto, while the comparisons with whole sentences and phrases in Virgil's, Pastorals, Seneca, Ovid, Terence, Aristophanes, and Theocritus, are many and suggestive. Sismondi (Literature of South of Europe, 1, 447, Bohn) acknowledges the want of originality in Guarini's Pastor Fido.

Prof. Fleischer's critique, aside from aiding one to form a correct view of Luzzatto's literary ability, is useful if it lead to a more sober estimate of the worth of the new school of modern Hebrew poetry, which still numbers its disciples in Europe. Not even the charm of the Hebrew language can elevate translations to the rank of original

works; and too many writers in this school, neglecting the themes which the Bible and Jewish history suggest, are often tempted to imitate foreign models and degrade the language of the prophets by their clever metrical adaptations..

II.

THE SOHAR SOCIETY.

I am indebted to Rev. S. Morais for the translation from the Italian of the following rules and regulations of Luzzatto's Sohar Society. These were obtained by R. Moses Tedeschi, of Trieste, at the request of Dr. Isaiah Luzzatto, of Padua. The original was found in Brody, having been taken there no doubt by R. Jekutiel of Wilna, who figures conspicuously in the history of Luzzatto. These rules having never yet been published, will be read with much interest.

Rules and Regulations which the attendants at the College (Beth Hammidrash) held in the house of the Rabbi Moses Chaim Luzzatto, voluntarily agreed upon in the year 5486 (1726).

1. The Sohar is to be read always, each member of the Association reciting a portion in turn during the day, from early morn until the hour for evening service, except on Sabbaths, holidays, the 9th of Ab, the eves of festivals after midday.

2. The members must not assume the reading (Limud) as a vow, lest they fall into sin, should the pledge for some cause remain unfulfilled; but they must fully determine in their minds what their hearts dictate and their lips express.

3. The reading must on no account be interrupted. Should one of the members come in to take the place of another, he must begin before the latter has concluded his part.

4. In case a member of the Association goes on a journey, a substitute must read his portion.

5. The reading must not be taken with the object of deriving any remuneration or material advantage, or for any personal gratification, but only to honor and please the Deity and benefit Israel at large. The sole reward looked for must be the hope that through the meritorious undertaking one may be led to do still more what will prove of spiritual advantage to the house of Israel.

6. Should any circumstance beyond control, or forgetfulness of the rules, cause a momentary interruption of the reading, it is hoped that neither heaven nor earth be harmed thereby, it being the firm resolve of the Association, by this reading, to build up, and not to pull down, to do good, aud not injury.

7. The Association may permit themselves to join with the reading the lessons of their revered teacher, Moses Chaim, who at noon-time imparts some new ideas to those present.

8. A member may honor a stranger by allowing him

to read a portion of his task, but he who does so must remain near the person he causes to acquire merit, and take back the volume soon after, proceeding with the perusal without a moment's delay. In that manner, he will have lost nothing, but it will be considered as if he had read the whole.

9. Sunrise and sunset should see the members engaged in the religious readings, and thus mornings and evenings be welcomed.

10. A member should not expect to derive any material advantage from the reading, not even atonement of sin. His aim should be to please the Deity and benefit Israel. (Signed)

ISRAEL HEZEKIAH,	son of	Michael Trevis.
ISSACHAR,	"	Rabbi Sabbathai Marini.
JEKUTIEL,	"	Judah Löw, the pious, of Wilna.
JACOB ISRAEL,	"	Rabbi Abraham Forti.
SOLOMON,	"	Abraham Dina.
MICHAEL,	"	Gad Terni.
JACOB CHAIM,	"	Asher Castelnuovo.

New members added to the Association, adopted the following rules :

1. No one wishes to benefit in any way from the reading, but each one desires that whatever action of a meritorious character be performed by him, the same may redound to the spiritual happiness of the whole Association, and be accounted a grateful recognition of God's mercies, and be a cause for Divine pleasure.

2. The good deeds of each should be considered as

performed in concert; not so the sins, by which neither the Association nor Israel at large must be harmed, so that the union of these members may yield advantage and no hurt.

3. The members must love each other like brethren, follow the path of peace and harmony, with a willing heart; and as an evidence of friendship must listen to remonstrances or admonitions offered, never showing displeasure or rancor thereat, but rather kindness so as to please the gracious God.

4. Whatever relates to this college and the meritorious readings must be kept secret, nor is anything to be disclosed without permission of our reverend teacher, Moses Chaim. Only Rabbi Jekutiel, of Wilna, is allowed to reveal in part what is done at its sessions, just as God will dictate to him, and as he himself considers necessary.

5. The duty of attending the reading of the Sohar must be fulfilled every day, at the hour that each can devote to it.

6. It is absolutely binding on all to attend on the Sabbaths and listen to the lessons of the reverend teacher, Moses Chaim, who, subsequently to the recital of the afternoon service, enlarges on new ideas, until the hour for the evening prayers.

7. In case the members, who first subscribed to the laws of the Association, have secrets in which the new members dare not participate, the latter promise to leave the room, without the least hesitation.

8. The members take upon themselves to abstain rigidly from back-biting and levity. They will behave sedately in all matters, to honor the Almighty, avoiding transgressions, or the omission of practices accepted in Israel. On the contrary, they assume to be more strict, adding fences to their religious ways, so as not to fall into the meshes of sin, but to continue upright before God. (Signed:)

Rabbi JEKUTIEL, son of Judah Low, of Wilna.
" ISAIAH, " R. Abram Romanin.
" MORDECAI, " R. Raphael "
" MOSES, " Michael "
" ABRAM, " Jacob Alpron.
" ISAAC CHAIM, " "
" SIMAN HAI, " "
" MORDECAI, " Ben Zion.

Observances followed at the college.

The attendants bind themselves not to utter a word of a character foreign to the subject of religion, while sitting around the desk where their revered teacher studies and instructs. Even when away from it, and at any time, they promise to sit with respect and decorum. Rabbi Israel Trevis, one of the first signers, chosen for the purpose, must thus address the Association: "Give honor to the God of Israel." Immediately, all bow their heads and remain perfectly quiet, though the topic of familiar conversation was left unfinished. At other hours also, if the members indulge in light talk and gossip, Rabbi Jekutiel may call the attention of R. Is. Treves to it, and the latter will say, "Give honor to the God of

Israel." Silence must follow immediately. Even outside of the college, should a dispute arise among the members, one of the party has the right to enforce silence by the words: "Give honor &c.

The salutation of every member on entering the college must be to bow the head and pronounce this sentence: "May the glory of the Lord last for ever, may the Lord rejoice in His works." To which the hearers respond: "May the name of the Lord be blessed for ever and ever!" In coming out, a person will walk backward, facing the attendants, and say: "May the Lord be blessed out of Zion," and the hearers will respond, "May the name of the Lord be blessed for ever and ever." When the revered teacher comes in, he will say: "May the Lord our God be with us, and He has been with our fathers;" and the members will respond, "May the Lord give power to His people, may the Lord bless His people with peace." When the teacher sits down at the desk, he will say, "The Lord is higher than all nations, His glory is above the heavens," and the response will be, "Who is like the Lord our God, that sits in high? who lowers himself to look (what is done) in heaven and earth." Then follows R. Is. Treves with the usual admonition, "Give honor &c." The attendants bow their heads and prepare to listen with devout respect to the lessons imparted by the revered teacher.

The revered Jekutiel, of Wilna, will say: "Wait for the salvation of the Lord, with unshaken faith."

"Humble yourselves before God, bend to the dust be-

fore His majesty, and raise to him humble prayers with all your hearts."

"Love God with a loving love, and with an upright and willing heart."

"Cling to God that you may live."

Then the teacher, seated on a high chair, where the Sohar is recited, begins the lesson.

The members, moreover, bind themselves not to raise their voices at the college, even in reciting prayers, except in studying the Talmud, when speaking somewhat aloud may be permitted. No changes will be made in these regulations without the consent of the Teacher. Permission is however granted Rabbi Jekutiel of Wilna, to do what he thinks proper, and as God dictates to him.

Both the first-named and the last named signers promise to avoid falsehood with the utmost rigidness, but to hold fast to truth. When a member says "By Truth!" the matter must be regarded as most solemn and binding.

Each of the members in turn should read the Decalogue and the 613 precepts. The recital of the whole Bible ought to be completed monthly, also the six orders of the Mishna (ש׳), eighteen chapters thereof being read daily.

The night reading of the Sohar must be done constantly, except from the Eve of the Day of Atonement to the end of Tabernacles nor should it be pursued on the evening of the 14th and 15th Adar, and from the eve of Passover to the end of the festival, nor on the evening

of the Fast of Ab, nor whenever the revered Teacher thinks proper to exempt his pupils from the task.

Whoever fails to obey the above regulations will bear the fault and the punishment, and none shall suffer through it.

Two were chosen, besides the Teacher, to preserve order and to see that the regulations were kept with religious scrupulousness, in honor of God and for the benefit of the Jewish people. (Signed),

MOSES CHAIM, son of Jacob Hai Luzzatto.
JEKUTIEL, " Judah Low, of Wilna.
MOSES DAVID, " Samuel Wah.

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